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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EWWT](#) [EFIS](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: MARITIME AND SAFETY AGENCY SEEKS TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE TO ADDRESS PIRACY, POLLUTION

Sensitive but unclassified-handle accordingly.

11. (SBU) Summary: The Director General of Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), in a July 18 meeting with EconOff, requested technical assistance in the areas of personnel training and capacity building. In response to a 2008 International Maritime Bureau (IMB) report that ranked Nigeria as the number one hotspot for piracy, NIMASA has drawn up a roadmap to address maritime security along Nigeria's coastline. Pollution control and the promotion of the indigenous shipping industry constitute two priority areas for NIMASA. End Summary.

12. (U) EconOff met with the Director General of NIMASA, Dr. Ade Dosunmu, who said Nigeria accounts for over 60 percent of the total seaborne traffic in volume and value in West Africa. NIMASA, created in 2006 through the merger of the National Maritime Authority and Joint Maritime Labor Industrial Council, serves as the apex regulatory and promotional body for Nigeria's maritime industry. NIMASA's primary functions include regulatory, capacity building, promotional, safety and security, and cabotage. On May 27, under the designation of the International Maritime Organization, NIMASA commissioned the Regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), a sub-regional search and rescue center covering nine West African countries.

Piracy Report Casts Nigeria in Bad Light

13. (U) In May, news media reported that Nigeria had been ranked by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), an arm of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), as the number one piracy hotspot in the world. Piracy in Nigeria is directed against oil company supply vessels and fishing trawlers. (Note: Interlocutors stressed to EconOff that not all waterborne criminal activities qualify as piracy under the parameters set by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), an agency of the United Nations tasked with shipping safety and environmental issues. The IMO follows the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea which declares

piracy to be commercially motivated and directed on the high sea. The IMB uses a more inclusive definition of piracy that makes no distinction between the motivation and location of the waterborne attacks. Under the IMO's stricter definition of piracy, therefore, Nigeria is not the number one hotspot. End Note) The Nigerian Navy reportedly is not equipped with the right equipment, weapons, and vessels to control and react to piracy incidents. NIMASA and the Nigerian Navy hosted an international conference, "Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea: Capacity Building for Effective Maritime Security," in late April 2008.

Piracy Threatens Shipping Business Prospects

¶4. (SBU) Nigeria's piracy problem poses tremendous commercial costs as well as safety and security concerns. International shipping operators told EconOff in previous meetings that the increasing rate of piracy and waterborne criminal activities on Nigeria's coastal water has resulted in escalating costs given higher insurance premiums, compensation packets for expatriate employees, and cost for self-help measures to ensure security. Douglas Berkheiser of Maersk Nigeria Limited said, given the huge cost piracy imposes on their operation, the company might have to reconsider taking on future contracts if the situation goes unaddressed.

Personnel Training, Capacity Building Needed to Improve Maritime Security

¶5. (U) Dr. Ade Dosunmu, Director General of NIMASA, told EconOff on July 18, technical training for security personnel is an area in

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need of assistance. He hopes to have NIMASA personnel attend training courses in the U.S. and to participate in site visits or exchange programs with its USG counterparts such as the U.S. Coast Guard. Currently NIMASA is collaborating with the Nigerian Navy under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to address maritime security issues. NIMASA is considering the implementation of a government-funded ship monitoring network under which vessels install tracking devices. Despite these advances, Dosunmu said NIMASA needs more security equipments, vessels, and security platforms to carry out its safety and security regulatory function. The enactment of a Maritime Security Act is also necessary, Dosunmu contended, to define piracy and criminal activities at sea and to set up a legal framework for punishment.

Ship Waste Dumping: An Environmental Concern

¶6. (U) Waste dumping, oily water, and bilge from vessels pose huge environment concern all over Nigeria, Dosunmu shared. While some companies are already providing reception facilities to receive and process wastes, there is a need to provide more at ports and terminals. Dosunmu said NIMASA has received letters of interest from companies wanting to construct offshore reception facilities. To counter the problem of waste and raise the profile of the issue, NIMASA plans to turn a small unit devoted to environmental issues into a full-fledged department in two months. Dosunmu hopes to learn best practices from U.S. agencies dealing with maritime pollution control.

NIMASA Funds New Ships for Indigenes

¶7. (U) Dosunmu said the lack of capital constitutes the biggest hurdle to developing an internationally competitive, indigenous shipping industry. Shipping operators do not have the capital to repair and maintain their old vessels or to acquire new ones. High interest rates prohibit borrowing from the banks, he added. NIMASA has created an intervention fund, with 25 percent of its total revenue, to provide financing at single digit interest rates to indigenous shipping operators to acquire new vessels. A second financing scheme focuses on providing fund for ship repair and maintenance. NIMASA is currently processing applications and will make the first grant within a few months time.

18. (U) Comment: Clearly Dr. Dosunmu would welcome collaboration with the United States, in particular the U.S. Coast Guard and Department of Transportation, in addressing any or all of the issues. A project focusing on the management of ship waste dumping would contribute to the overall environmental protection effort in Nigeria. End Comment.

19. (U) This cable has been cleared with Embassy Abuja

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